



Student Wellbeing Policy

Rationale

Integral to all Catholic schools and to their mission as instruments of the Universal Catholic Church is the belief that all members of the school community are sacred, “created in the image and likeness of God” (Gen 1:27). The core values of Mercy Education reflect and challenge each student and staff member to give witness to this ideal through compassion, respect, service, hospitality, courage and justice.

At Sacred Heart College Kyneton, we believe in the dignity of each and every member of our College community. We are committed to building an inclusive culture that promotes and values diversity. We believe that creating an environment where uniqueness is celebrated, where students feel empowered to safely share their opinions and ideas and where everyone has the opportunities and support to be their best is the right thing to do.

Sacred Heart College recognises that self-regulating, compassionate and resilient young people will perform well academically and display capacity to create strong social bonds, enjoy healthy relationships and choose responsible lifestyles. To this end, the College provides a positive social and learning environment where students feel safe, have a sense of belonging and can achieve.

Sacred Heart College is a family supportive, Catholic school in the Mercy tradition, which is a key strength in developing support and understanding between school and home. This results in wellbeing issues being addressed in a timely manner with appropriate student support systems put in place.

Principles

Throughout the College, a number of guiding principles and practices operate which contribute to student wellbeing and an optimal learning environment. They are:

- Effective classroom management
- Engaging, relevant curriculum
- Effective teaching and learning
- Opportunities for extracurricular involvement and student leadership
- A whole-school approach to pastoral care
- The promotion of positive interpersonal relationships
- Fair disciplinary procedures, guided by restorative practices
- Programs which build resilience, self-esteem and inclusion.

Pastoral Care System

College Year Level Leaders (Years 7-12) and Heads of School (Years 7-9 and 10-12 respectively) oversee the pastoral care system under the direction of the Deputy Principal-Student Wellbeing. They monitor students’ overall academic and social and emotional development with the assistance of Homeroom Teachers (HRT) and staff with specialist learning and wellbeing roles.

Students meet with their Homeroom /Home Room Teacher (HRT) each morning for 15 minutes to keep informed and connected to the life of the College.

In the Junior School years, students are taught mostly in their Homeroom groups with their HRT also teaching them for at least one subject if possible. Knowing students is key to effective Wellbeing. There is an understanding that younger students may need more guidance and consideration in regards to keeping them safe due to their actions and behaviour, as well as those of others. The College has a duty of care to keep all students free from harm and engaged in worthwhile learning experiences. This assists in creating a stable transition from primary to secondary school. Some movement of students into different Homerooms each year also occurs to facilitate formation of new peer relationships as well as create calm and productive classrooms.

In recognition of the changing needs and alternative academic pathways of all students, the newly created positions of Heads of School for Year 7-9 and 10-12 are to support the Year Level Leaders. They also liaise closely with the staff responsible for the VCE, VCAL and VET programs, as well as with careers, wellbeing and teacher support staff to map out a smooth journey through schooling for students.

Pastoral Care and Positive Education Curriculum

Sacred Heart College offers a formal Years 7-9 Positive Education and Life Skills Curriculum via structured Pastoral Care Sessions. At Year 10, students undertake Respectful Relationships awareness raising. These lessons are timetabled to occur on a fortnightly basis and are centred on the themes of:

- Developing positive relationships
- Learning to learn
- Decision making and future life and career planning
- Health and personal wellbeing
- Importance of equal and valued relationships
- Building resilience.

The College has an extensive range of extracurricular activities and programs that encourage older students to interact with and mentor younger students, providing real-life opportunities for them to develop leadership and team skills.

Student Leadership

Sacred Heart College aims to provide as many opportunities as possible for all students to be involved in a variety of forms of leadership, as well as the opportunity to work as part of a team. This helps build a strong sense of belonging, self-worth and pride in the College. The skills developed through providing service to their peers and others within the school community provides students with a strong foundation for future leadership roles in both their professional and personal lives.

It is expected that all students who take up student leadership roles will uphold Mercy values and conduct themselves in a manner which brings honour to themselves and the entire College population.

College Captains

The two College Captains set an example for the entire student body, representing them at school events and formal assemblies as well as maintaining close communication and consultation with the Principal and Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing.

Senior School Cabinet

The School Captains run the Senior School Cabinet, which includes the other Senior School Captains who have leadership in more specific domains of Faith, Mercy@Work, Academic; Applied Learning, Sport, Arts, Culture, Student Wellbeing and Camp Campaspe under the overall guidance of the Deputy Principal-Student Wellbeing.

House Captains are both Senior and Junior and are overseen by the Sports Coordinator

Within each area, there are also committees of students whom the Cabinet Captains support.

Junior School Cabinet

The student leadership structure is mirrored by the Junior School, where Years 8 & 9 students who work in the same leadership areas (except for Applied Learning), focus on initiatives for the Junior years as well as assist the Senior leaders with whole school projects. The Junior leaders are supported by two Junior Captains.

Homeroom Captains

Each Homeroom elects a Class Captain each semester to help in the process of sharing important daily information and running of Year Level Assemblies.

Peer Support Program

The College runs a Peer Support Program. This involves selected Year 10 students who work together as leaders with the Year 7 Homerooms for a number of formal sessions throughout the year.

Respectful Relationships

Sacred Heart College provides clear policies for students on appropriate pro-social behaviour and adopts a restorative practice approach in conjunction with appropriate consequences to any breaches in this regard.

The College does not permit or engage in any form of corporal punishment.

The College's Respectful Relationship - Anti Bullying policy outlines clear rules and related sanctions designed to keep students safe at all times.

The College has a Behaviour Management and Support System designed to protect the rights of all students to learn in a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment. The right to learn is at the centre. It is also designed to assist students to understand the importance of being accountable and taking responsibility for their actions. This involves the College engaging regularly with parents and the student in a supportive, structured process.

Students who work through the Behaviour Management System without success, will move to the Behaviour Monitoring System. This involves monthly catch-ups with the Year Level Leader and parent to monitor progress and discuss concerns that may arise. The next stage is the Student Support System. This is an intensive process involving fortnightly meetings with parents, students, Year Level Leader and Head of School. Wellbeing support may be involved if required. This is a pro-active, student driven process, where strategies for improvement are generated, and student feedback given on the success. Consideration of the wellbeing of every student is paramount.

If all avenues of support are exhausted and the processes have not been successful, it may be determined that another school may be a better option for the student. Students will continue to be supported during this process and assistance will be provided in finding a suitable alternative.

Student Counselling

The College provides a team of Counsellors with backgrounds in Social Work, Psychology or Counselling whose purpose is to support students experiencing significant social and emotional concerns to engage with the school and participate as fully as possible in the educational program.

They support Year Level Leaders, Homeroom Teachers, Heads of School and the Deputy Principal-Student Wellbeing in the care of students by providing short-term counselling to students as needed and advice to staff on managing individuals at risk. They also serve as a liaison between home and school and external health agencies where required and run positive programs and classroom sessions with groups of students, designed to support positive mental wellbeing and strengthen resilience.

Students may access counselling support through self-referral, parental or staff referral (see Appendix for Flow Chart). Staff are encouraged to consult with Homeroom Teachers and/or Year Level Leaders and parents/caregivers when making referrals and then fill out the Wellbeing Referral Tool. The Wellbeing Team meet regularly to allocate referrals and respond in a timely fashion.

Individual concerns are acted upon in a timely fashion, information shared discreetly, and strategies to support the student are discussed by relevant teaching, pastoral and specialist staff as well as the Deputy Principal-Student Wellbeing as needed.

For students who present with significant and/or ongoing health, learning or emotional and social needs, consultation with parents and caregivers take place on a regular basis. Referrals and liaison with outside agencies and practitioners occur to ensure that important information is disseminated and that expert advice is followed at the school level.

The College has a critical incident response plan and, in cases of potential trauma affecting students and/or staff within the school, the school organises on-site counselling, the communication of pertinent information to relevant parties/authorities, support of parents and caregivers, referrals, and ongoing monitoring of students most affected by the incident.

In cases where a student is deemed to be at significant risk of self-harming or harm to others, or in such distress they can no longer take part in their normal school program, the College will take immediate action to ensure their safety and the safety of other students. This may include requesting parents/ caregivers to collect their daughter/son from school, contacting outside agencies directly (such as CAMHS – Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service), or calling ambulance/police when necessary.

Health Centre Coordinator

The Health Centre Coordinator (HCC) provides first aid assistance to students as well as informing parents and caregivers of incidents of medical concerns which require their attention. The HCC develops Health Support Plans for students with chronic medical conditions and/or students returning to school after significant illness. The HCC liaises with external health care providers and the Pastoral and Wellbeing Team within the College.

The HCC also raises awareness within the Sacred Heart College community of healthy lifestyles, positive choices and general health and wellbeing.

Related Policies

Sacred Heart College Kyneton:

- *Attendance Policy*
- *Child Safety Policy*
- *Child Protection Reporting Policy*
- *Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints Resolution Policy*
- *Critical Incident Management Policy*
- *Respectful Relationships – Anti Bullying Policy*
- *Student Behaviour and Support Policy*
- *Student Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Responsible Use of Digital Devices- Students*
- *Uniform Policy.*

Appendix (below)

Student Counselling Referral Process

RESPONSIBILITY	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
DATE DEVELOPED	December 2017
DATE UPDATED	April 2020
REVIEW DATE	April 2022

Appendix: Student Counselling Referral Process

